

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0001], in its entirety, with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] The present application is related to four co-pending and commonly-owned applications filed on even date herewith, the disclosure of each is hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety, these four applications being respectively entitled:

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT WITH MULTISTROKE FIRING INCORPORATING AN ANTI-BACKUP MECHANISM, U. S. Patent 6,959,852 Ser. No. 10/673,929, to Frederick E. Shelton, Mike Setser;

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING A FIRING MECHANISM HAVING A LINKED RACK TRANSMISSION", U. S. Patent 6,905,057 Ser. No. 10/673,930, to Jeffrey S. Swayze, Frederick E. Shelton IV;

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT HAVING MULTISTROKE FIRING INCORPORATING A TRACTION-BIASED RATCHETING MECHANISM, U. S. Patent 7,000,819 Ser. No. 10/673,662, to Jeffrey S. Swayze, Frederick E. Shelton IV; and

"SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING A MULTISTROKE FIRING POSITION INDICATOR AND RETRACTION MECHANISM, Ser. No. 10/674,026, pending, 10/374,026, to Jeffrey S. Swayze, Frederick E. Shelton IV.